

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An exposure ~~A method of exposure for forming a transfer pattern on a mask substrate by irradiating exposure light on a plurality of master masks, each of the master masks having a pattern that is~~ formed by dividing an enlarged pattern of a the transfer pattern, reducing a pattern image for each master mask, and transferring the reduced ~~images~~ image onto a the mask substrate, the exposure method comprising: on which the transfer pattern is to be formed,
supporting the mask substrate which has a surface that is substantially perpendicular to a predetermined direction, the supported mask substrate being deformed with respect to at least the predetermined direction;
~~said method of exposure comprising~~ detecting deformation information of the mask substrate corresponding to a transfer position of the pattern image; and
adjusting at least one of (i) a relative positional relationship between the pattern image and the mask substrate at the time of transfer of the pattern image and (ii) a projection characteristics characteristic of the pattern image based on the deformation information.
2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, ~~further comprising~~
wherein the deformation information of the mask substrate is obtained by detecting identification information formed on the master mask ~~to obtain the deformation information of the mask substrate.~~
3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the projection ~~characteristics~~ characteristic of the pattern image ~~include~~ includes an optical ~~characteristics~~ property of a projection optical system ~~for projecting that forms~~ the pattern image.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, ~~further comprising supporting wherein~~ the mask substrate is supported at a plurality of points without chucking and ~~wherein~~ the deformation information includes information relating to flexing of the mask substrate by its own weight.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein an amount of exposure of the mask substrate is changed in accordance with a change amount of a line width of the pattern image for each of the master masks.

6. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus provided with an illumination system ~~for irradiating that irradiates~~ illumination light ~~to on~~ a plurality of master masks, each of the master masks having a pattern that is formed by dividing an enlarged pattern of a transfer pattern, and a projection optical system ~~for reducing that reduces~~ a pattern image for each master mask and ~~projecting projects~~ the ~~pattern reduced~~ image onto a mask substrate ~~on which to form~~ the transfer pattern ~~is to be formed on the mask substrate~~, the exposure apparatus comprising:

a support device that supports the mask substrate which has a surface that is substantially perpendicular to a predetermined direction, the supported mask substrate being deformed with respect to the predetermined direction;

a detection device ~~which that~~ detects deformation information of the mask substrate ~~in accordance with~~ corresponding to a transfer position of the pattern image; and

an adjustment device ~~which that~~ adjusts at least one of (i) a relative positional relationship between the pattern image and the mask substrate and (ii) a projection characteristics characteristic of the pattern image ~~at the time of transfer of the pattern image~~ based on the deformation information.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6, ~~further comprising a stage which~~ wherein the support device supports the substrate at a plurality of points without chucking.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~An exposure~~ A method for transfer of forming a pattern ~~onto~~ on a substrate by ~~exposing~~ transferring a pattern image onto the substrate, by ~~illumination light through a mask formed with the pattern, the exposure method of exposure~~ comprising:

supporting the substrate at a plurality of points without chucking, the substrate having a surface that is substantially perpendicular to a predetermined direction, the supported substrate being deformed with respect to at least the predetermined direction; and
_____ adjusting at least one of (i) a relative positional relationship between the pattern image and the substrate and (ii) a transfer conditions condition of the pattern at the time of transfer of the pattern image based on at least information relating to flexing of the supported substrate by its own weight corresponding to the a transfer position of the pattern image on the substrate.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein the transfer ~~conditions condition~~ condition of the pattern ~~include imaging characteristics~~ image includes an optical property of a projection optical system ~~for forming a projected image of that forms~~ the pattern image on the substrate.

10. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein ~~the pattern is divided into more than one part to be formed as a different mask, and an amount of exposure of the substrate is changed in accordance with a change amount of a line width of the pattern image at the time of transferring the pattern image onto the substrate for each of the masks~~ pattern images are transferred onto different regions of the substrate by adjusting at least one of the relative positional relationship and the transfer condition for each of the pattern images.

11. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 10, wherein the substrate becomes pattern images are reduced images of patterns formed by dividing an enlarged pattern of the pattern in a reduction projection type optical exposure apparatus to make a working mask to be used in an exposure apparatus for device production and an optical type reduction projection exposure apparatus is used for transferring the pattern image different from the optical exposure apparatus.

12. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus ~~for transferring that forms a pattern to~~ on a substrate by ~~exposing~~ transferring a pattern image onto the substrate, ~~by illumination light through a mask formed with the pattern,~~ the exposure apparatus comprising:

~~a stage which~~ support device that supports the substrate at a plurality of points without chucking, the substrate having a surface that is substantially perpendicular to a predetermined direction; and

an adjustment device ~~which that~~ adjusts at least one of (i) a relative positional relationship between the pattern image and the substrate and (ii) a transfer conditions condition of the pattern at the time of transfer of the pattern image based on at least information relating to flexing of the supported substrate by its own weight corresponding to the a transfer position of the pattern image on the substrate.

13. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus ~~which that~~ transfers a pattern of a mask to image onto a substrate, comprising:

a moving unit on which the substrate is placed, the moving unit having three support portions ~~for supporting the substrate, which that~~ contact with a second plane surface of the substrate different from a first plane surface on which the pattern image is to be transferred, the substrate supported on the three support portions being deformed with respect

to at least a predetermined direction substantially perpendicular to the first and second surfaces; and

a correction device ~~which~~ that corrects a transfer error of the pattern ~~which image that~~ is caused by supporting the substrate on the three support portions based on deformation information of the substrate by its own weight.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the correction device adjusts, ~~for correcting the transfer error,~~ at least one of (i) a relative positional relationship between the pattern image and the substrate and (ii) a transfer condition of the pattern image.

15. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein chucking power by suction to the substrate on the moving unit is set to substantially zero.

16. (Currently Amended) A device manufacturing method comprising:
producing a working mask by use of the exposure method ~~of exposure~~
according to claim 1; and

transferring the pattern formed on the working mask onto a photo-sensitive object by use of an exposure apparatus different from an exposure apparatus used for producing the working mask.

17. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the transfer pattern is a pattern on a working mask used with an exposure apparatus for producing a device.

18. (Currently Amended) A mask manufacturing method comprising transferring a plurality of master patterns onto a substrate to form a working mask by use of the exposure method ~~of exposure~~ according to claim 8.

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 18, wherein:

the master patterns correspond to different parts of the enlarged pattern of the pattern to be formed on the working mask; and

reduced images of the master patterns are projected onto the substrate.

20. (Previously Presented) A device manufacturing method comprising:
producing a working mask by use of the method according to claim 19; and
transferring a reduced image of the pattern formed on the working mask onto a photo-sensitive object by use of an exposure apparatus different from an exposure apparatus used for producing the working mask.

21. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein:
the apparatus is employed for manufacturing a working mask used with an exposure apparatus for producing a device; and
the pattern is a master pattern corresponding to part of a pattern to be formed on the working mask.

22. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein:
the apparatus is employed for manufacturing a working mask used with an exposure apparatus for producing a device; and
the pattern is a master pattern corresponding to part of a pattern to be formed on the working mask.